

KOREN ZAILCKAS

smashed

STORY OF A
DRUNKEN
GIRLHOOD



VIKING

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the summer

Koren Zailckas turns fourteen she is standing in the kitchen of her best friend Natalie's house, dripping wet after a swim in the lake. With a sly grin, Natalie emerges from a cupboard holding a bottle of Southern Comfort. With one stiff sip, Koren is initiated into the world of drinking. From then on, she will drink faithfully, fanatically. In high school, her experimentation will lead to a stomach pumping at age sixteen. In college, her excess will give way to a pattern of self-poisoning that will grow more destructive with each year. At age twenty-two, Koren will wake up in an unfamiliar apartment in New York City, elbow her friend who is passed out next to her, and ask, "Where are we?" *Smashed* is a sober look at how she got there and, after years of blackouts and smashups, what it took for her to realize she had to stop drinking.

In this astonishing literary debut, Koren relates how drinking warped her self-image and teenage development. With the stylistic freshness of a poet and the dramatic gifts of a novelist, she reveals a shockingly familiar story—that of a smart, sweet, "normal" girl who drinks herself to the point of oblivion, failing to see how her emotional distress, doomed relationships, stifled hostility, and depression are all entangled with her supposedly "harmless" and tacitly condoned bingeing. An unflinching and candid self-examination, and an informed rant against a consumer culture that idealizes the effects of alcohol,

Koren's story is that of thousands of girls like her who are not alcoholics—yet—but who routinely use booze as a shortcut to courage, a stand-in for good judgment, and a bludgeon for shyness.

A crucial book for any young woman who grew up under the allure of booze, or for anyone who is concerned about someone locked in a pattern of dangerous drinking, *Smashed* is eye-opening, wise, utterly gripping, and destined to become a classic.



Koren Zailckas

grew up in the suburbs of Boston and attended Syracuse University. She lives in New York City. This is her first book.

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